

As it stands today, \$162 billion will be cut from Medicare Advantage, forcing seniors to buy Medigap insurance like that sold by AARP, one of the many special interest groups the President cut a sweetheart deal with behind closed doors. There is also another \$350 billion that will be cut from the regular Medicare, which will directly remove access to medical care for this, the Nation's Greatest Generation.

In rural areas like much of my district in Louisiana, seniors will lose access to critical medical care as home health, doctors, and hospitals—they will all be closing their doors.

I call on Speaker PELOSI to stop this horrible attack on the health and welfare of our senior citizens now.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, the mantra of our Republican colleagues here in the House is "Just say 'no.' We like the status quo."

Well, that was their mantra when it came to the Recovery Act, which has now helped improve the stock market. Housing starts are up, and, in Colorado, unemployment is down from 7.8 percent in July to 7 percent today. The trend is right.

In Colorado, we have some 42 projects, transportation projects, as a result of the Recovery Act. We have increases in energy. We have wind companies coming. We have solar companies coming to Colorado. It has been a success, to their chagrin.

Now we hear "Just say 'no.' We like the status quo" when it comes to health care. This country can't stand the status quo when it comes to health care. Premiums are up, deductibles are up, discrimination exists against people with prior illnesses. That's got to change.

We are going to vote "yes" and stop this inequity in health care.

HEALTH CARE

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue of great importance—health care. The potential bill before us should concern all Americans. While I have numerous issues with this bill, I will highlight two.

The first is abortion. There is no language to exclude abortion coverage in this bill. An overwhelming majority of Americans are against Federal tax dollars paying for abortion; yet this bill opens the door to do just that.

Second, cuts to our seniors. This bill is paid for out of the pockets of our seniors, with \$162 billion coming from Medicare Advantage, a plan millions of our American seniors, including 17,000 in my district, enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, we can do better than this. Let us not pass a bill that could harm our most vulnerable, our infants, and our elderly.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GINGREY of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, my patients' health care reform should not be written behind closed doors.

When Democrats came to Congress, they pledged, led by Speaker PELOSI, the most open Congress in history; yet, now, they are planning a costly government takeover of health care in the dark of night without any public input.

Mr. Speaker, a \$1 trillion, 2,000-page blended plan that will dictate how Washington will run our health care system deserves real transparency, not just empty promises about openness.

Speaker PELOSI, my patients deserve better. Your legislation is going to tell them what type of health care their family can receive and what Medicare benefits will be cut from our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, even if the Democrat majority is going to prevent minority participation, my patients deserve to know what's going on behind these closed doors in the dark of night. If this bill really is the right prescription for reform in the health care system, then it will stand up to the light of day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that House Rules require that they address their remarks to the Chair.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, when I was home recently, I spoke to a constituent who had lost his job because he had contracted gall bladder cancer. He was using every dime of his unemployment benefits to pay for the treatment necessary to keep him alive.

He is an example of the millions of Americans who have either lost their health care because they got sick and lost their job or the millions more who are just one paycheck or one illness away from losing their own. We have to have an answer for those individuals and for those families.

The Republican strategy of stopping health care reform at no cost provides no answer for the people of this country who have been waiting too long for a solution. It's time for this House to get beyond politics and start to provide real answers for the millions of individ-

uals and families like that gentleman, who has his life put at stake by his lack of health care, and come together. Put politics aside and pass health care reform that will lower costs and expand access for the people of this country.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. JENKINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, Republicans have health care solutions, but our solutions don't involve breaking promises to America's seniors. Our solutions don't involve slashing Medicare Advantage, a program that 7,400 seniors from my district rely on day in and day out. Our solutions don't involve massive cuts to Medicare that will go far beyond reducing waste and do real harm to current programs that Kansas seniors enjoy.

One of the President's stated goals for health care reform is to increase choice and competition in health care. Rather than moving forward with a plan that will reduce choice and have harmful effects on our seniors across the Nation, it is time to sit down and have an honest discussion about how we can extend health care coverage without a government takeover and without cutting Medicare.

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HEALTH CARE

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, my mother is 83 and not in the best of health. When I see what is being proposed in this House, health care agendas that take away from seniors like her, I get a cold shiver down my spine. Medicare and Medicare Advantage are lifelines for many elderly Americans, especially in my area of south Florida.

How can this House justify \$162 billion in cuts to Medicare Advantage? Why in this economic recession are we limiting the choices for seniors or causing many to lose their current health care coverage? For seniors in my congressional district, cuts to Medicare Advantage would be disastrous.

The Congressional Budget Office says that Medicare prescription drug premiums will increase by 20 percent because of the Democrat plan. I know, and my constituents know, that seniors simply cannot afford this.

The health care reform bill makes it tougher on seniors to get the coverage and the treatment they deserve after a lifetime of hard work and sacrifice. Of course we need health care reform, but reform should not be on the backs of our seniors.